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REVIEW



## The 'haunting' and the 'haunted': Whiteness, orthography and the (post)-apartheid condition in Namibia

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### ABSTRACT

In this paper I contend that a project of recovering one's ethnographic archive can engender not only a process of reflexivity, including on one's positionality, but also offer a heuristic device for exploring wider ethnographic issues. In starting with a reflection on my position as a white male researcher in Namibia, I focus my analysis to a broader exploration of whiteness in Namibia, and the enduring presence of apartheid in the (post)-apartheid era. In building on Tina Campt's haptic, I confront my own nostalgia and hauntings which emerged during the course of retrieving the orphaned ethnographic archive. In the process, I made space for making sense of the nostalgia and hauntings of other whites in Namibia, and more broadly, for exploring the relationship between whiteness and the (post)-apartheid condition. Further, I argue that a new vocabulary and orthography are needed for engaging with the (post)-apartheid condition. In traversing it as a series of puncta, I explore the complex interrelationship between whiteness' hauntings – its historical claims on people, space and time – and the ways in which apartheid's traces continue to haunt whiteness in the (post)-apartheid period. Haunting and haunted, I argued that white people's experiences, narratives and perceptions in Namibia are characterized by historical inequalities and privilege, as well as a sense of dislocation and dispossession. Ultimately, it is my belief that, as noted earlier, (post)-apartheid must be viewed as a condition that does not yet fully exist, but can only be desired, being understood as deferred.

### KEYWORDS

Namibia; postapartheid; whiteness; archive; auto-ethnography

## Introduction

I have wanted to write this paper for a considerable time. The idea first came to me a decade ago, as I began to dig through my 'ethnographic archive' in search of the ethnographic artefacts (Riles 2006) that I needed in order to complete the monograph I was working on (Fumanti 2016) – my indexed notes, tape-recorded interviews and their transcriptions. In boxes and folders stored in different places, I rediscovered a disorderly collection of handwritten notes, diaries and yellowed pictures taken almost two decades

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ago, as well as ephemera which I had gathered over the course of several years. As I travelled back and forth between Namibia and the UK, I kept returning to, and expanding this archive. But while I had initially started this process out of practical necessity, with time I came to realize that my handling of it was increasingly permeated with unsettling emotions. There was my nostalgia for a bygone era and the sense of loss for those who had departed too soon, many taken by AIDS, a disease whose name was whispered furtively at the funerals of young men and women. There was also the discomfort at all the 'stuff' that I had disowned and disavowed over the years, expelling it from my narrative. Eventually, I confronted this 'orphaned archive' (Campt 2017) within my broader ethnographic archive, and embarked on a slow process of recovery.

Tina Campt, who works on the lost archives of mixed race people growing up in Germany during the inter wars years, whose voices and experiences were silenced by official historical narratives, suggests that we engage with them through what she calls a 'haptic' mode (2017). This is the emotional, sensuous dimension of the work of recovery, which first emerges through the physical handling of archival material, but goes well beyond the epidermal feeling of touch to involve us beyond the material, in the manifold possibilities offered by the senses. The haptic requires that we 'listen to the archive', its frequencies, hidden rhythms, and sounds. This allows for exploration across time, as well as the recovery, at different moments, of the distinct temporalities enclosed in the archive. As I argue in this paper, the haptic also affords the researcher the possibility of dealing with their own temporalities, especially when their research stretches over extended periods of time.

Here I take Tina Campt's work as a point of departure for my personal project of archival recovery. Over the years, engagement with my ethnographic archive has elicited different emotive responses. Initially I worked with photographs and was haunted by the present absence of the many who had died very young and who my photographs had frozen in handshakes, embraces and joyful poses. Through this reflection on loss and temporality, I began to ponder on the personal and emotional loss that accompanies fieldwork that spans two decades. The images spoke to me in sonic terms, their stillness echoed with the sounds of the music we loved to play; the raucous laughter and memorable stories and jokes we shared; and the clinking sounds of the many bottles of beer we drank (Fumanti 2010). In 2011, in an attempt to capture this sense of loss, I produced a short video – an animated collage of these images accompanied by a voice-over.

A few years later, I returned once again to my archive and began the work of confronting some of the stories that had left an impression on me but which I had not written about yet. These stories escaped conventional academic narratives, and were also difficult to handle in ethical terms, being personal stories that close friends had shared with me privately. I decided to experiment with non-traditional forms of narration and representation, and one such story, which revealed the painful memories of the violence and horror of the Namibian independence struggle, became an illustrated work of fiction (Fumanti 2014a). This process of fictionalization allowed me to retell a difficult story in a more ethical fashion than a conventional approach might have done, whilst engaging with people's insistence that in order to understand apartheid and the liberation struggle, I must use my imagination. And so, this fictionalized account became a series of encounters between three imaginations: the protagonist's, my own and that of Tuli-Mekondjo – the Namibian artist who illustrated it.

This paper constitutes a further attempt to recover the orphaned archive. Whilst my ethnographic archive brought back to my memory and senses moments of intimacy, conviviality, loss and pain, it also foregrounded my complex position as a white male researcher in post-apartheid Namibia (Hartigan 2000). The index to my diaries was filled with entries regularly featuring keywords such as whiteness,<sup>1</sup> white, race and apartheid, reminding me of some of the uncomfortable encounters that had left an impression on me but which I had disowned and disavowed. These were situations in which my presence in the field as a white male anthropologist afforded me a complex and messy position of intimacy and alienation, proximity and distance; a position which involved open confrontations and refusals, but also silences and omissions. In addition, the situations also pointed to the ways in which my own experience of whiteness remained problematically intertwined with local understandings, with the experiences of white people living in Namibia, the enduring practices of race, and the legacies of apartheid.<sup>2</sup> Vidali and Phillips (2020) argue that the ethnographer's archive is messy and at best aspirational; rather than static, it is in an ongoing, expanding and progressive state of 'becoming'. In this respect, the ethnographer's archive conveys continuities and discontinuities and junctures and dis-junctures in time and across time. It also communicates possibilities and future potentialities (Bryant and Knight 2019) which are never fully developed due to the researcher's practices of selecting, forgetting, and more problematically, disowning and disavowing their archive.

In the auto-ethnographic project with which I engage in the following pages, my primary focus is on the complex and tangled experience of recovery of the orphaned archive of an ethnographic research practice that extends across two decades. I will deal more particularly with the messy and complex experience of being a white anthropologist in a context in which whiteness, then as now, constitutes a specific experience of the (post)-apartheid condition. I aim to show how auto-ethnography need not simply be a process of reflexivity and positioning per se (Pitard 2017), but can serve as a heuristic device that allows for the exploration of wider ethnographic issues. Hence, by reflecting on my positionality, I am exploring not only the ways in which my experience was intertwined with that of white Namibians and other whites I encountered in the field, but also, how that experience can open to a broader consideration of whiteness in (post)-apartheid Namibia, of its historical claims on time, space and people.

### **(Post)- apartheid fieldwork in 'black and white'**

Let me clarify my usage of the terms 'black' and 'white'. I use these terms as it is through them that Namibians most often describe people on either side of the racial divide. Alongside the English words for black and white, people employ a wider linguistic repertoire of vernacular terms, often used in pejorative ways.<sup>3</sup> The use of these neat racial categories is illustrative of the experience of race in Namibia and the enduring legacies of apartheid's racial policies. Yet the terms fail to include those who do not identify with these rigid, binary racial markers, such as 'coloureds', and also Asians and people of mixed parentage. Their use also silences the ways in which these racial categories are intersected by, inter alia, class, gender, generation, ethnicity, sex, disability and education.<sup>4</sup> On entering the field, anthropologists are located within these racial markers, from which rigid categories we try to dissociate ourselves, moving in and out of differently racialised spaces. These are

mediated by the anthropologists' class, age, gender, education and sexuality. This is a process fraught with opportunities, obstacles and contradictions.

As Cheney underlines (2007), being a white academic in Africa implies an ongoing negotiation of one's identity against the existing shifting landscape of racial relations in the postcolonial context (Fox 2012). As a white European male anthropologist, the process of negotiating my positionality rested for the most part on a leaning on and moving away from the comfort and privilege afforded primarily by my race and gender, but also by my education, class and age. Still, this process carries with it a degree of indeterminacy which, while it permits us to negotiate access to and egress from different white and black spaces, also raises deep ethical and existential questions around power, loyalty, and the web of relations we painstakingly attempt to build in the field.

Over the years, in straddling black and white spaces, I constantly adjusted and re-negotiated my positionality. For my interlocutors, both black and white, I was, at different times and in different contexts, an object of interest, curiosity, desire, repulsion and hostility. My whiteness proved an unquestionable advantage in certain situations, whilst putting me in challenging positions in others. While making clear from the start that my allegiances remained with my black friends, my actions and statements required constant cultivation in Namibia's (post)-apartheid context to avoid my being viewed as 'another white man', especially if I was seen talking to a white person. At the same time, while moving between these two spheres, I occasionally elicited material assistance from white Namibians I encountered at different points during my research. It is to these moments of proximity, when my position was ethically compromised by sharing in whiteness' historical claims that I turn in this paper.

Haunting and haunted, whiteness in Namibia is characterized by enduring inequalities and privilege, as well as an increasingly intense sense of dislocation, dispossession and vulnerability (Gressier 2015; Ives 2017). The paper will unpack some of the ways in which whiteness in the (post)-apartheid era, while it continues to make historical claims on time, space and people, is also at the same time claimed by history. This is most notable in the socio-economic transformations and the power shifts that have characterized the (post)-apartheid era (Friedman 2011; Fumanti 2016). In confronting my own nostalgia and hauntings, including my own complicities and silences, I will be writing about others too, about whites in Namibia and their own nostalgia and hauntings. In so doing, the paper aims to offer an exploration of whiteness and the enduring legacies of apartheid in Namibia.

### **Orthography, punctuation and the (post)-apartheid condition**

In order to capture the complexity of race relations in (post)-apartheid Namibia, it is necessary to deploy an experimental approach. I construct mine largely in non-linear fashion, through a collection of fieldwork notes, images and videos. In part, this is because my paper builds on the temporal and spatial dislocations of different moments in my fieldwork and the diverse encounters I have had in Namibia over the past two decades. However, it is also because, as Mbembe argues (2015), we need a new vocabulary for engaging with, and describing, the (post)-apartheid condition. In acknowledging the ways in which after two decades of freedom, South Africa remains

haunted by the structures of white power and supremacy, Mbembe calls for the exploration of a novel terminology to describe the present condition: 'If we cannot find a proper name for what we are actually facing, then rather than simply borrowing one from a different time, we should keep searching' (2015, 2). The narrative devices I use in this paper comprise the novel linguistic repertoire that Mbembe calls for. Yet, I contend that beyond this, we also need a new grammar and a new orthography to support this vocabulary and to describe the shifting and changing boundaries of the experience that constitute-(d) life during and after apartheid. The new orthography, morphology and syntax of the (post)-apartheid condition – with the brackets capturing the simultaneous presence and absence of apartheid during its purported aftermath – are intended as both interpretive and descriptive of experience, whilst at the same time enabling one to reveal its accidental and unexpected nature.

I am interested in the place of orthography, and not simply as a matter of spelling. In particular, I explore the relationship between phonemes and graphemes in a language, as well as other elements that may be considered part of orthography, such as hyphenation, capitalization, word breaks, emphasis, and punctuation.<sup>5</sup> My interest is in both the multiplicity of hyphenations, capitalisations, word breaks and emphases that constitute the (post)-apartheid condition in an orthographic sense, and the changing punctuation that regulates its dislocated temporalities. Thus, the orthography I evoke in this paper, remains central for an engagement with the disjointed and different temporalities offered by the orphaned archive and the (post)-apartheid condition. In this sense, it can never be just about causation, and linearity, but also about experience and emotion, and hence, 'haptic' (Camp 2017).

Activating these haptic orthographic registers requires, I contend, new theoretical and representational repertoires. To this end, I draw on Roland Barthes' notion of the *punctum*, which he defines as the sensory, intensely subjective effect of a photograph on the viewer: 'The *punctum* of a photograph is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)' (1980, 26). This new (post)-apartheid orthography also requires new modes of representation, including at the visual level. This is because, as Barthes reminds us, the *punctum*, unlike the *studium*, refuses the limitations of pre-existing forms of knowledge production. Whilst the *studium* builds largely on metanarratives, the *punctum*, anchored within the spheres of intimacy and subjectivity, requires innovation beyond that which has already been said.

It is the bruising and poignancy provoked by the ethnographic encounters I discuss below that form the basis for my argument in this paper that the (post)-apartheid is characterized by an orthography *punctuated* by moments in which the traces of apartheid unexpectedly emerge to the surface of the quotidian. It is these moments, I maintain, that throw out into the open the complex positioning of white researchers in (post)-apartheid Namibia – revealing our shifting positionalities, vulnerabilities, silences and complicities with whiteness, and our complex entanglement with the history of apartheid and its legacies in a (post)-apartheid context.

In the punctuated orthography of the (post)-apartheid, how do we bring to the fore the contradictions of a (post)-apartheid condition which at times feels like it is still apartheid? How do we make sense of the simultaneous presence of stillness and the shifting and changing experiences that constitute-(d) life during and after apartheid? And can we, as scholars and researchers, engage with the (post)-apartheid condition through *puncta*?

## Traversing the (post)-apartheid condition through *puncta*

To answer these questions, I want to engage with recent literature that is emerging from South Africa. Although there are similarities between Namibia and South Africa, there are also very important differences, as well as discontinuities and continuities (Fumanti 2016). There is now a growing consensus amongst historians of colonial Namibia, at the time called South-West Africa, that the country was not simply a 'fifth colony' of what was then the Union of South Africa. To the contrary, having played a central role in the making of its apartheid regime and imperial expansionist project in the region (Henrichsen et al. 2015), it was central to South Africa's history (Miescher 2012; Moore et al., 2021). In fact, one could argue that Namibia constituted an extreme example of apartheid policies which were enacted through radical spatial segregation (Pendleton 1974; Simon 1986; Miescher 2012), land dispossession (Silvester 1993; Hayes et al. 1998), the colonial establishment of native reserves/homelands (Werner 1998), and control over people's movements (Silvester, Wallace, and Hayes 1998). These colonial policies carry long-lasting legacies in the (post)-apartheid era, which are acutely visible in the structuring and striating of space, and in the extreme inequity of land distribution in contemporary Namibia.

While this historical literature addresses the relationship between Namibia and South Africa, there is a notable absence of work, especially in anthropology, that deals with the contemporary legacies of whiteness as a racial category in Namibia, which is why I build my argument on the back of an emerging critical South African literature. Doing so allows me to move beyond the geographical and theoretical boundaries of Namibia and its insular scholarship.<sup>6</sup> More specifically, I take cues from scholarship that, in the wake of the Marikana massacre (Brown 2015) and the #Rhodes Must Fall, #Fees Must Fall movements (Booyesen 2016; Ndlovu 2017; Chikane 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018), has begun to engage with that which has long been intractable (Nuttall 2013; Nyamnjoh 2016; Chikane 2018; Coetzee 2019). This is the enduring legacy of race in particular, and the ways in which whiteness continues to profoundly shape every aspect of life in the (post)-apartheid period – a period which, as Van Bever Donker et al. argue (2017), is constituted through social relations that were shaped under apartheid:

these persist in this time named by the adjective 'postapartheid' as a form of remainder: as the remains of apartheid, as those remains that apartheid produced and, indeed, continues to produce, as the very conditions through which the social coheres in this time and, as such, as that which produces this social as (perhaps) already out of time, even before it has properly begun. (2017, 7)

In this sense, (post)-apartheid as a condition which is truly 'post' does not fully exist yet, but can only be desired. Navigating it as I do, that is through a series of *puncta*, requires that one pass through repetition after repetition:

To traverse the social in the wake of apartheid, is to attend to the repetitions that impede but also make possible another social beyond the horizon of apartheid's ordering of extrinsic difference. (2017, 6)

These repetitions are the racial formations that impinge on daily life on an individual as well as a structural level, shaping the ways in which whiteness is constituted and



reconstituted in (post)-apartheid contexts such as South Africa and, as I argue here, Namibia. As Steve Biko reminds us, racism takes many different forms – from the systemic to the quotidian level, as revealed by the daily acts of white tutelage, paternalism and care. In this sense, as many in the ‘fallist movement’ argue (Chikane 2018; Ngcaweni and Ngcaweni 2018), the main issue in (post)-apartheid South Africa remains what Biko calls the ‘blackmail of whiteness’, that is, the ways in which black people continue to be integrated on whites terms:

The integration of black people into the established set of norms that keeps the inferior-superior white black stratification will continue to make the white a perpetual teacher and the black the perpetual pupil. (Biko 2005 [1978], 26)

Building on these theoretical points, I begin traversing (post)-apartheid Namibia through the device of the *punctum*, transitioning from the personal and quotidian to the structural effects of systemic racism that carry over into the present. In so doing, I situate my ethnographic project of recovering the orphaned archive within a wider theoretical discussion of the (post)-apartheid condition in Namibia.

The first *puncta* offer auto-ethnographic reflections on the ways in which the whites I encountered in Namibia dealt with my whiteness, and in so doing, reproduced it as a discreet racial category, one that continues to make historical claims on space, time and people in the (post)-apartheid. I subsequently transition my argument into collective nostalgia, loss and recovery via the work of South African artist William Kentridge. Here I focus on the way in which German Namibian artists, in particular Nicola Brandt, have begun through their work to confront the legacies of the colonial past, and particularly of the Nama-Herero genocide, within a transforming urban landscape characterized by contested sites of commemoration and state memorialism. In the last *punctum*, I offer my own engagement with the complex and transforming cityscape of Windhoek, Namibia’s capital, with a video I call *intervention*.

### ***Punctum 1. The blackmail of whiteness: reflections on a (post)-apartheid oxymoron***

I was taught. I was taught not just about Namibia – what it is in the present and what it was in the past. I was also taught how I should build my relationships with black Namibians and other Africans in general. Indeed, the fact of being white in Namibia attracts whites’ expectations that ‘you are one of us’. Perhaps, then, whites thought I needed their tutelage. Or more simply, perhaps they wanted to volunteer that which they thought would be useful for my research as they complained about the current state of affairs and most importantly, taught me about black Namibians. It must be said that NGO ‘expats’ often fall into this trap, with the particularity that they cloak themselves in the mantle of the ‘white saviour’. Thus I was patronized, I was advised. I became the white European who needed to be educated. Reproducing the old habit of silencing native voices and of translating native experiences to render them real and intelligible for European audiences, they spoke for the natives. This is a trap into which anthropologists have often fallen, engaging in ‘ethnographic ventriloquism’ which, as Geertz puts it, claims ‘to speak not just about another form of life, but to speak from within it’ (1988, 143).



## Diary entry, June 2000:

The other day, I took a lift from Windhoek to Rundu. The driver is the wife of a local businessman, a white Namibian who lived in Rundu most of her life. She is married with two children; both are boarding at an elite school in Windhoek. They are prominent members of Rundu's white community and of The Anglers club, organisers of the off-road annual race and of boat trips on the Okavango River. I have been in Rundu for six months now. I was waiting at the bus station in Windhoek opposite the Katutura state hospital. She came to pick up a friend and she recognised me. I had been in her shop a few times before and so asked me if I wanted a lift. I am sitting in the car. She is driving. The drive is long. After the various bits of chit chats, she tells me of the great changes after Independence. How things have worsened, how politicians are corrupt etc. I counter that I think the end of apartheid can only be a good thing, she said "yes, but people really need help." She tells me how for example she has established a saving scheme for her workers: "I deduct part of their salary and I keep it in my saving. They cannot touch it for months or a whole year and then they can use it if they want to. It is their money of course. This way I will help them with their savings. You see, otherwise they will spend money so quickly and with the extended family they will never get to the end of the month. There is always some expense, some wedding, some school fee, some funeral, always funerals." "Ah!" She exclaims exhaling a deep breath. I am sitting there and thinking, we are in the middle of the HIV-AIDS pandemic and funerals are very common. "At first, they did not like it, they did not understand, but now they thank me, they say 'mum thank you so much.'"

The persistent tropes that black Africans are incapable of holding onto money, that weddings and funerals and other family matters are purportedly trivial things to spend money on, and that they should be 'protected' and 'saved' from themselves, have a long history in Namibia, and more widely across colonial Africa. During my most recent archival work in Windhoek, I encountered substantial correspondence between the South West African administration and the Chamber of Mines on the issue of pay for the native workforce. In 1916, the colonial authorities proposed a system of delayed payment of salaries to protect African mine workers from their 'spendthrift habits' and the 'predatory nature of shop keepers'. Colonial officers argued that the natives wasted all their salaries on 'useless trinkets' and returned home at the end of their contract empty handed.<sup>7</sup> As Sullivan (Sullivan 2001) highlights in her work, this trope and practice continues to be applied to 'Bushmen' as control of the cash they receive and spend 'ensur[es] cheap labour and justifi[es] the perpetuation of extreme servitude and poverty both under colonialism and apartheid (Gordon and Sholto-Douglas 2000) and today' (Sullivan 2001, 185).

Through the cultivation of these tropes, whites in Namibia continue to make historical claims over space, time and people. Whiteness, I argue, becomes a certain way of being in the world that exists through the (post)-apartheid grammar of the oxymoron I refer to as 'protective oppression'. Whilst racial oppression was formally abolished at Independence, it continues to exist in unfavourable labour conditions, in extremely unequal land and wealth distribution and in the control and appropriation of employees' wages. In this sense, as both white Namibians and expats often argue, the future of black Namibians and Namibia at large will always be dependent on the assistance and care of its white population, and of other 'whites of good will', as they describe them.

## *Punctum 2. 'We care! they don't!' living the (un)-ethical life in the (post)-apartheid era*

Diary Entry 2, March 2000:

I have been waiting since 9 am for my friends to pick me up. We had planned a trip to the coast. I packed my bag and waited. As time went by, I called my friends' mobiles and they were all turned off. I called their offices, but I was told they had not been in. Pacing up and down the garden frustrated and increasingly nervous I met my neighbour, Mary, a middle-aged white Zimbabwean or 'Rhodesian', as she was fond of saying. Her husband was an evangelical missionary in the Kavango region. He had worked for Shell across the continent. They lived a comfortable life and when he retired, they decided to become missionaries. Their ten year old daughter is with them, ready to go to a boarding school in Kenya - I was told, the most exclusive one in Africa. Their other children, all grown-up now, are living in London and Johannesburg. Sad and disappointed, I told Mary what had happened that morning and then I retreated inside the house. Later in the afternoon I was sitting outside under the porch. I was feeling dejected and upset and was writing my notes. My neighbour's daughter came in. She sat next to me and with a very reassuring tone she told me, "You will be fine. Do not worry. This is how they are. They (black people) do not care. There is nothing you can do about it." Stunned, I looked at her, shrugged and walked inside the house in silence.

The young neighbour's comments, and others I heard over the course of the decades, point to the dilemmas of living an ethical life in the (post)-apartheid era. As Veena Das reminds us in her work, the great challenge for living together after violence is to live ordinary lives that are ethical, in which care is the constitutive drive (Das 2007). It is an issue that unsettles us as white anthropologists working in a postcolonial context. It certainly concerned me then as it continues to do now. As I read this passage from my diary, I cannot help but think that I inadvertently elicited the girl's comment: I was her neighbour. I am white. I am an academic. I lived in a former white-only area of town, then an elite neighbourhood. I would read sitting on the porch. I listened to BBC radio's *Focus on Africa* in the evening and played classical music on the radio. I cannot recall all I said and did on the day, but knowing what I was like then, I would have paced up and down the house, raising my voice and cussing in Italian. I was distressed and she did what she thought was right. Behaving in a way that she believed to be ethically sound, she came to comfort me in a difficult moment. But in doing so she reproduced the discourse of white paternalism.

Furthermore, her comments foreground conventional wisdom, shared among whites in Namibia that black Namibians were better off under apartheid. The argument is that the apartheid government cared, investing a great deal of money in infrastructures, hospitals, clinics and schools. Workers therefore had houses and did not have to pay for anything. However, it is well known that any social or infrastructural investments made during apartheid had little to do with care and more with the creation of an efficient workforce (Dubow 2014) and the economic imperative of meeting the demands of the growing black middle class (Posel and Van Wyk 2019). By contrast, the government's care for the white population was driven by the need to prevent, at all costs, the scourge of white poverty. As in the United States, the fact of being in a condition in which they required support undermined whites' claims to racial superiority, which were underpinned by eugenics discourses (Mhike 2020). If assistance failed to lift whites out of poverty then these shortcomings were concealed behind the image of white wealth and power (Willoughby-Herard 2015).

This narrative of the 'good old days of apartheid', as whites described them to me, sustains nostalgic views about the past, and with them, the racialised distinction between

blacks and whites as that between those who care-(d) and those who could not care for themselves and were therefore cared for. This view that blacks are dependents ties into the ideas, entrenched among many white Namibians, that black people should never be trusted, that they are lazy and opportunistic (Steyn and Foster 2008; Verwey and Quayle 2012). They seek whites' money and assistance, or simply the prestige that comes with whiteness. The endurance of these racialised discourses and practices makes it impossible for whites and blacks to experience relatedness and friendship on ethical terms.

As Walsh and Soske write in their volume *Ties that Bind* (2017), intimacies and their construction were and remain part of the political economy and production of racial difference. As they argue in relation to post-apartheid South Africa, thinking white supremacy and anti-blackness requires that we confront how the constitutive violence of settler society works to render, a priori, full and ethical reciprocity between whites and blacks impossible.

What happens when a person continues to live an unethical life, entrenched in their own racial privilege, holding firmly to a racist position? What happens to them if they do not make the effort or do not want to take on board the idea that living an ethical life is necessary?

Let me introduce you to Mark.

### *Punctum 3. The end of apartheid's apparent 'civility'*

I have known Mark for over three years now. He is married and has five children, and they all live in South Africa, where Mark himself was born. He and his family are Afrikaners who, in fleeing the 'black menace', crossed the border twice, eventually settling in Namibia because 'SA was too dangerous' (Crapanzano 1986). Thus at the start of the Angolan war he came to then South-West Africa with his family. His father was in the South African Army. He remembers fondly the time they spent in the North of Namibia, travelling with his father in his *Bakkie*, their pick-up truck. The image of the *Bakkie* is the epitome of mobility across much of Southern Africa. It is also a visual reminder of enduring racial segregation – with the white driver sitting in the front of the cabin with his dog and the black workers sitting at the back in the open cargo bed. When Namibia declared independence in 1990, Mark's whole family left for South Africa, only returning in 1994 when the ANC won the election.

Mark is articulate. He reads extensively and is angry about global capitalism, which he understands as 'a banking and financial conspiracy'. He sends me regular messages on WhatsApp – a mix of jokes, articles about Namibia and its impending downfall and personal stories. One day he shared with me CCTV footage of the violent mugging of a white man in central Windhoek. From the grainy images, it is hard to make out what exactly has taken place. We can only see two black men and a white man. One of the black men seems to be holding the white man in a choke, while the other reaches for his pocket. But while the CCTV images are blurred, Mark's intention in sharing this footage was clear: to convey a sense of danger and white vulnerability, as the following caption which he added to the video suggests (Picture 1):

Things are getting bad. Very bad. Namibia is not safe anymore. I think we are going to leave soon. I might go to SA or better to Europe, find me a job in the UK please.



**Picture 1.** Screenshot, CCTV camera, Tal Street, Windhoek.

Mark tells me that ‘It pains me to see all this. It makes me sick’. His is an embodied experience; he feels that the streets are increasingly unsafe for him and for white people in general. He perceives that violence is rampant and considers that certain things, like the violent mugging in the CCTV footage, would not have happened before independence. He feels that Windhoek’s public space is filled with violence, because ‘people can attack and rob you’ and that it lacks civility because ‘these black people can sell on the streets without a permit’ and because ‘taxi drivers own the streets’. Taxi drivers are objects of hatred and anxiety in equal measure, both for him and other whites in Namibia, for, as he relays, they ‘do not know how to drive; they are dangerous; noisy; they honk all the time; they are a nuisance and cause accidents’.

For Mark, the taxi drivers with their loud horns are the most visible and audible signs of change on the streets of Windhoek since Independence. They occupy the streets and sometimes the pavements, blocking traffic and creating ‘a nuisance’. In a sense, they have entered an urban space which can no longer be regulated by racialised exclusion, for mobility itself has been deracialised. The streets of Windhoek are therefore unlike the other spaces which the white minority still holds onto *de facto*, and which it maintains as exclusively white spaces from which black Namibians continue to be barred (Low 2009).

#### ***Punctum 4. The refusal of time and the phantom limb syndrome***

During the years in which I have been doing research in Namibia, I have observed how Black Namibians are fond of saying things like that their fellow white citizens ‘cannot and do not want to deal with the change’; or that ‘they are stuck in the past’. What do these comments mean? What is it that whites cannot apparently cope with? How can one be stuck in the past?

Here I take my cue from William Kentridge’s installation *The Refusal of Time* (2005), in which conventional understandings of linear time are overthrown.<sup>8</sup> In dealing with colonialism, race and industrialization in his native South Africa, Kentridge argues that time should be understood as disjointed. His work speaks of a time that cannot be set right – a time that is and remains in and out of joint, reversed and forwarded, fastened and slowed down. In this sense Kentridge’s work deals not so much with nostalgia as with the embodied and existential experiences of colonialism, of the latter’s times, spaces and geographies. Through the medium of animated films, colonial maps, archival images and reconstructed colonial situations frequently appear in his works (De Jong

2018). It is through these animations and the techniques behind them that Kentridge can address another important aspect of the refusal of time; that of the impossibility of its erasure. As Haziza stresses:

Kentridge's animated films entail drawing an image with charcoal on a single sheet of paper, filming it, erasing it, drawing over the erased image, and filming again. However, because he draws in charcoal, it is impossible to totally erase the previous stages of the drawing, which results in a residue, a trace of the previous image within the next. (2018, 134)

It is through the technique of erasure, argues Haziza, that Kentridge conveys the passing of time in many of his animations. By drawing, erasing and redrawing over, the artist gives a sense of movement to his work, whilst highlighting the impossibility of fully erasing what came before, leaving 'visible the shadows of what has been erased – physical remnants of past actions and vestiges of his process' (Haziza 2018, 134). Kentridge's 'gesture of erasing presence, while keeping it legible' (Haziza 2018) convey his reflections on the legacies of apartheid in contemporary South Africa.

My discussion of the (post)-apartheid period as a condition that does not yet fully exist but can only be desired, resonates with Kentridge's conception of the double refusal of time and erasure. Both ways of approaching the question of change suggest ways of framing both Mark's experience of embodied pain, and black Namibians' claims that whites are stuck in the past. Pain and stuckness are not simply effects of nostalgia, but relay an actual, physical refusal of life in the (post)-apartheid era. They are symptomatic of whiteness and its blackmail (Biko 2005 [1978]), of the ways in which whiteness continues to make claims over time, space and bodies in the (post)-apartheid. Mark's pain is in fact also compelled by his resentment at change and his distinct feeling of victimization. Mark is a white man, and 'as a white man', he tells me, 'I am at the bottom of society in contemporary Namibia'. In this sense, I want to argue that his experience, and of other white Namibians who share Mark's sentiments, is akin to a medical condition known as the 'phantom limb syndrome', that is, the embodied experience of pain that follows an amputation, and the sensation that the limb is still there, attached to the body, even if the patient knows very well that it no longer is.<sup>9</sup> As an experience, it is not pain for a loss, nor nostalgic longing for the limb which is no more. It is an embodied pain which is not a product of one's reflexive consciousness.<sup>10</sup> Thus it is about the body being incapable of coming to terms with the loss. Much like Kentridge's refusal of time and erasure, 'the gesture of erasing presence while keeping it legible', the phantom limb syndrome is another form of refusal. It is a refusal that both coexists with and supersedes nostalgia, with the latter as semantically distinct, a peculiar pain of longing, the pain of return in its classical Greek sense of νόστος (return/return home) and άλγος (pain). In this way, the phantom limb syndrome becomes a metaphor for whiteness as an embodied and existential experience of the (post)-apartheid condition.

Whiteness, I contend, continues to make historical claims on the present, haunting it through nostalgia,<sup>11</sup> while at the same time being haunted, through embodied pain, by the past. Both haunting and haunted, whiteness is an inescapable experience of the (post)-apartheid condition in Namibia. Further, as my earlier recollections of ethnographic encounters with white Namibians suggest, it is one that white anthropologists doing research in a (post)-apartheid context can never completely escape.

### *Punctum 5. German-Namibian spectropoetics*<sup>12</sup>

The idea of the spectre and of the postcolonial present's haunting by the colonial past are common tropes in African scholarship (Hochschild 1999; Baucom 2005; McEwan 2008; Liebenberg and Hayes 2010; Margaretten 2011; Demos 2013; Marchal 2017) and in the works of contemporary African artists (Kentridge 2005, 2012; Searle 2009; Kiluanji 2010; Demos 2011) including, as I show in this section, contemporary German Namibian artists (Brandt 2014, 2020).<sup>13</sup> Likewise, in stories about them, ghosts are for the most part the embodied, albeit spectral manifestations of a past that has returned to haunt the living. Ghosts reveal themselves to ask for a proper and dignified burial; to seek help in atoning for their sins; to redress ancestral wrath and family disputes, and to guide the living through ancestral land (Sullivan 2017).<sup>14</sup> In this sense, spirits can intervene in people's lives in both benevolent (Lan 1985; Werbner 1991) and disruptive ways (Margaretten 2011). Whatever the case, people do not identify with ghosts; they are instead haunted by them.

Although I build on these insights, my argument departs slightly from them. I want to suggest that white Namibians' incapacity to deal with the present, is not simply an embodied response to haunting by spectres, but rather an identification with them. There is no attempt to live 'more ethically' with the ghosts, as T.J. Demos suggested in *Return to the Postcolony* (2013), or even 'more justly', to put it in Derrida's words (1994). It is in this sense that Kentridge's double refusal of time and erasure and Mark's pain and nostalgia for a time that was and is no more, can be seen as identifications with the past and with one's ghosts. In this, they echo Hamlet's famous monologue in Act I, Scene V, 'Time is out of joint: o' cursed spite that I was ever born to set it right' (Shakespeare 2008). Here Hamlet is not merely haunted by his father's ghost, as De Carlo argues (2013), he identifies with it. It is moreover through this identification that Hamlet experiences the feeling of being out of time, which state renders him incapable of acting in the present. In this sense, the spectral metaphor only works in cases in which we believe that a person has identified with a ghost and has therefore become incapable of setting time back on track.

This is an existential issue that affects the experience of whiteness – it is that aspect of it which black Namibians described as white Namibians' inability to live in the present, their stuckness in the past. Haunting and haunted, whites in Namibia continue to make historical claims in the (post)-apartheid period. Amongst other expressions, these claims take the shape of denial and collective amnesia about the Herero and Nama genocide perpetrated by German colonial troops between 1904 and 1907 (Kössler 2015).<sup>15</sup> It is these issues that German Namibian artist Nicola Brandt confronts in her work.<sup>16</sup>

In her fourteen-minute triptych video *Indifference* (Brandt 2014),<sup>17</sup> Brandt invites us to explore the external and internal landscapes of three Namibian women, against the backdrop of Namibia's painful colonial past. The video is not a simple exploration of postcolonial subjectivities through the well worn practice of looking back at the women's personal biographies. On the contrary, *Indifference* is a complex and subtle engagement with the personal and collective that confronts that which remains hidden or is left unspoken in Namibia's contested narratives of the past, and particularly the Herero and Nama genocide. Her work attends to the presence of the unspeakable, evoking Derrida and more particularly T. J. Demos' analysis of how artists attempt to cast light on the ghosts and spectres that haunt the personal, and how their individual efforts at self-

making and self-reflection unfurl. Such efforts inevitably affect the collective, and in *Indifference*, the discursive evocation of the spectral casts a disconcerting shadow over the land, its people, and Namibia's postcolonial nation-building. In this work, Brandt collaborated with the Johannesburg-based director and editor Catherine Meyburgh, a long-time associate of William Kentridge. Having assisted Kentridge with *Black Box/Chambre Noire*, Meyburgh is familiar with the subject of German colonial history in Africa and the more nefarious aspects of its Enlightenment-themed philosophical legacy (2005).<sup>18</sup>

*Indifference* reveals the relics and ruins of the colonial industrial landscape along the desert coast, the mining and violent expropriation of the land and its resources. These ruins appear next to the unmarked graves of Nama and Herero labourers and prisoners of war buried along what will soon become the new railway line near Lüderitzbucht. These sequences are testament to the colonial political economy and to the aesthetics of the spectral in Brandt's work. The sound of the wind howling through the landscape and of the waves battering the rocks; the morning mist enveloping the industrial scene only to evaporate under rays of sunlight piercing through the cracks of empty buildings. This is a very distinct aesthetic: neither the clichéd touristic representation of Namibia, nor the artist's own fascination with an empty terrain battered by the forces of nature. This landscape haunts the viewer as it captures the juxtaposed and complex nature of subjective and collective narratives against the backdrop of the unspeakable.

When the images and voices of the three women appear in the video, Brandt's subtle engagement with the spectral becomes not just political, but also personal and moral. On the surface, their narratives appear rather mundane: a woman dressed in a Herero traditional costume charges tourists to take pictures of her in Swakopmund; an old German woman reminisces about meeting a new partner while tending a grave in the cemetery; and a young woman recently returned to the country reflects on the changed context she observes. Yet their stories also reflect the legacy of the colonial past and that which constitutes haunting in the making of postcolonial subjectivities in Namibia.

The old German woman's account is peppered with nostalgic reflections, and the rhetorical devices used by Brandt favour the unclear, unspoken, out of sight, and linguistically closed. Yet at moments the heavy-handed prejudices of a particular mindset are evident, as when she utters 'The blacks are now the masters ... the whites have no say any more ... right, right, right?' But it is the setting of the woman's room that perhaps is most revealing of the unspoken and the hidden: adorned with ordinary objects and photographs, it also contains a bookshelf in which sits a copy of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

Equally powerful is the Herero woman's account. At first, the viewer hears that she sells her image mainly to German tourists, which suggests that this is an ordinary way of making money. The woman appears to enjoy what she does, she is very proud of her Herero dress, and the past seems but a distant memory. 'This dress is very nice ... The fighting is in the past ... If they see me in this town, they take pictures of me every day', she states. And yet, she is fully aware of her own history, as a descendant of the genocide survivors, and she is aware that this past can't be escaped: 'Maybe when they go home, they watch these pictures and they say ...' "these are the people we killed". This account testifies to the ongoing validity of Hannah Arendt's insight that 'It is entirely right to say that we are haunted by the past'.



In *Indifference*, the spectres of the Herero and Nama genocide emerge in unexpected ways that illuminate complex and contested relationships between the land, people, and their history. These are relations in which the artist, who is of German Namibian descent, is personally engaged. Thus by putting on a Herero dress of the kind introduced by German colonial settlers, Nicola Brandt takes on the complex relationship between Namibian Germans and the painful history of Namibia. Like the rest of the video, the manner in which this clothing and its significance are conveyed is subtle. The artist does not look at the camera; in fact, she never reveals her face. Rather, we see only her dress in carefully choreographed gestures, slowly played in reverse, as if with a continual time lapse. This is perhaps as an acknowledgement of the ongoing interconnections between the past and present, or perhaps it is intended to represent another aspect of the refusal of time and the complex identification with the ghosts that continue to haunt the living in (post)-apartheid Namibia. It is with this sartorial statement that *Indifference* reveals the tension amongst the hidden, the unspoken and the invisible in the making and unmaking of personal and collective postcolonial projects in a space punctuated by the physical and spatial debris of the colonial past.

### *Punctum 6. Interventions in a (post)-apartheid landscape*

Landscapes, real and imagined, exhibit the traces of the colonial past and of overlapping time and space, as is widely recognized by scholars of Namibia and South Africa (Reddy 2016) and more broadly, of settler colonialism in Southern Africa (Hall 1993). In working with colonial cartography and map making and their bearing on the (post)-apartheid landscape in South Africa, William Kentridge introduces the idea of *Time as Geography* to convey how time continues to make its historical claims on present and future landscapes. In Namibia, this nexus between time and landscape is visible as national, regional and internal borders, and in the veterinary fence dividing communal land in the North from commercial land in the South, which is known as the 'Red Line' (Miescher 2012). It is also evidenced in colonial and postcolonial town planning and urbanization (Pendleton 1974; Simon 1986; Fumanti 2016), in land and farm demarcations, and in the persistently unequal and still racialised access to land and resources (Melber 2005, 2019). *Time as Geography* continues to leave traces on the Namibian landscape, as Brandt so eloquently shows in her work. Time as a foundational factor is, however, characterized by junctures and dis-junctures, continuities and discontinuities, and this complexity is perhaps most visible in the expanding urban landscape of Windhoek.

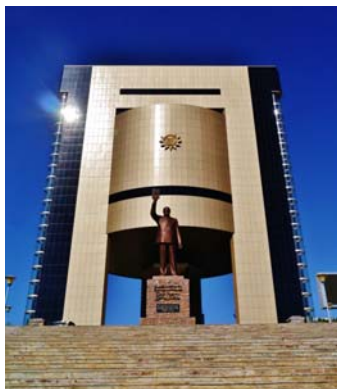
Since Independence in 1990, the city's urban landscape has changed dramatically.<sup>19</sup> Amidst the new high-rise offices, large shopping malls, luxury hotels, blocks of flats for the young and upwardly mobile middle-class, restaurants, casinos and exclusive bars, other buildings have also made their appearance in the city landscape. These I call 'urban interventions'. They are interventions, I maintain, because they appear to break the continuity of time, to disrupt the traces of the colonial past.<sup>20</sup> They also represent examples of postcolonial state memorialism (Werbner 1998), publicly funded efforts to collectively remember and honour those who died during the liberation struggle. The most notable case in point is the new Museum of Independence, locally and popularly known as the 'coffee machine' or the 'SWAPO spaceship' (Picture 2).<sup>21</sup>

The museum is a unique urban intervention that stands very visibly on top of Windhoek's most iconic hill. It is adjacent to the Alte Feste Museum, and in very close proximity to the German Lutheran Christuskirche and the Parliament Gardens. Built and designed by North Korean architects, its glass and steel structure visually dominates Windhoek's skyline. The building does not resemble any other in the capital and provides a very tangible effort to remove traces of the colonial past from the city's landscape and its futures. In fact, the Museum was built on the site in which the *Reiter Denkmal* previously stood. This was a German equestrian colonial monument erected in 1912 to commemorate the German soldiers and civilians who died during the Herero-Nama wars of 1904 and 1907. For black Namibians, however, it represented a clear and painful reminder of German colonialism and the Herero genocide.

As was the case with other contested statues, the deposition of the *Reiter Denkmal* to make space for the new Museum was vociferously opposed by a large section of Windhoek's German and Afrikaner residents, as well as by white expatriates and tourist operators.<sup>22</sup> Concerned citizens objected that the statue was part 'of the country's history' and 'heritage'. They also argued that the proposed building would tarnish the city's landscape. Although the statue was successfully taken away, similar arguments proved effective in preventing the removal of the *Marine Denkmal* in Swakopmund (Picture 3).<sup>23</sup>

Urban (post)-apartheid interventions, like the taking down of colonial statues and the construction of new memorial sites, disrupt the continuity and ordinariness of urban life while also exposing deep seated divisions in society. These voices of public dissent both make evident the contested nature of state memorialism and public commemoration in a (post)-apartheid context, and foreground the ways in which whiteness continues to advance historical claims over space, time and people. For example, a distinctive white Namibian narrative revolves around the assertion of the right to participate in public life as equal citizens. While this is a legitimate claim, its expression is often (re)-articulated not only through the language of paternalism and white tutelage, as I argued earlier, but also by making 'their spaces' – including land, housing and hospitality – virtually inaccessible to the majority of black Namibians.

As with my previous *puncta*, I present this concluding *punctum*, a short experimental film I made entitled *Five in the Afternoon. Poetic Intervention in a (post)-Apartheid*



**Picture 2.** The Museum of Independence, Windhoek.



**Picture 3.** The *Reiter Denkmal*, Windhoek.

*Landscape* (2018), as a kind of intervention in Windhoek's (post)-apartheid urban landscape. I chose this medium because, in offering an alternative to conventional narratives of the (post)-apartheid condition, it bears out my argument on the new orthography and vocabulary required to portray it. The film is an attempt to offer a visual and aural engagement with Kentridge's idea of *Time as Geography* in (post)-apartheid Namibia. Whilst the film's images unfold on screen and the sounds of the streets can be heard in the background, my voice breaks the ordinariness of the scenes I have captured. With this juxtaposition, I remind the audience of my presence in the landscape, and suggest that while I am caught by apartheid's historical claims on Windhoek's (post)-apartheid landscape, by focusing on people's daily commutes, I am also able to capture the simultaneous presence of stillness and change. The voice-over is a reading of Federico Garcia Lorca's poem *The Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias* (García Lorca 2013 [1935]), and particularly its opening stanza, *La Cogida y la Muerte*, 'The Goring and Death'. Here time is disjointed, both fixed and suspended, bringing to mind Kentridge's take on temporalities, and the idea that there is no clear sense of progression. As de Ros points out:

The suspension of time conveyed in the sentence 'a las cinco en punto de la tarde' (at five o'clock in the afternoon) and reinforced by the regular repetition of the chiselled octosyllabics 'a las cinco de la tarde', precludes the sense of progression implicit in the underlying clock-work sound effect of the lines. (2000, 118)

Lorca's repetition 'at five in the afternoon' allows me to focus metonymically on a specific moment in the day, when the legacy of apartheid's urban planning and labour regulations emerges most potently – that is, the commuting hour. The film shows Windhoek's traffic and people's attempt to board commuter taxis, as well as the conspicuous consumption that accompanies now, as it did in the past, the emergence of novel socio-economic cleavages. Towards the end, the film captures the co-presence of colonial and postcolonial buildings, such as the Lutheran Christuskirche and the new Museum of Independence. The film concludes with a return to stillness and calmness, moments after five o'clock.

In building and at the same time diverging from Garcia Lorca, my film focuses on the possibility of (re)-making relations that assert the ordinariness of people's lives. By focusing on the simultaneous presence of apartheid and its transitions, the film aspires to show the ways in which ordinary people navigate the present through daily routines that

reproduce and potentially disrupt, what remains of apartheid. This poetic intervention thus offers an opportunity to explore what is left of the past in Namibia's (post)-apartheid present, as well as the constraints and possibilities presented by emerging political economies.

## Conclusion. (Post)-apartheid deferred

This paper has showed how a project of recovering one's ethnographic archive can engender not only a process of reflexivity, including on one's positionality, but also offer a heuristic device for exploring wider ethnographic issues. I started with a reflection on my position as a white male researcher in Namibia, noting how my whiteness involved me, in sometimes unexpected and bruising ways, with white Namibians and other whites I encountered in the field. I then expanded the analysis to a broader exploration of whiteness in Namibia, and the enduring presence of apartheid in the (post)-apartheid era. In building on Tina Camp's haptic, I confronted my own nostalgia and hauntings which emerged during the course of retrieving the orphaned archive. In the process, I made space for making sense of the nostalgia and hauntings of other whites in Namibia, and more broadly, for exploring the relationship between whiteness and the (post)-apartheid condition.

Further, I argued that a new vocabulary and orthography are needed for engaging with the (post)-apartheid condition. In traversing it as a series of *puncta*, I explored the complex interrelationship between whiteness' hauntings – its historical claims on people, space and time – and the ways in which apartheid's traces continue to haunt whiteness in the (post)-apartheid period. Haunting and haunted, I argued that white people's experiences, narratives and perceptions in Namibia are characterized by historical inequalities and privilege, as well as a sense of dislocation and dispossession. Ultimately, it is my belief that, as noted earlier, (post)-apartheid must be viewed as a condition that does not yet fully exist, but can only be desired, being understood as deferred.

In writing on the student protests that swept across South Africa's University campuses, Francis Nyamnjoh (2016) argues that, while addressing a broad range of issues affecting access to and the quality of education, at the core of the decolonizing movement is opposition to the racialised discourses and practices that continue to haunt life in the (post)-apartheid era (Booyesen 2016; Ndlovu 2017; Ngcaweni and Ngcaweni 2018; Rhodes Must Fall Oxford 2018). Similarly to the recent #BlackLivesMatter protests in the US, Britain and Europe, activists here argue that true change can only happen through the recognition that whiteness and its blackmail remain central to the experience of (post)-apartheid South Africa.

As I have attempted to show in this paper, the traces of the colonial past in the (post)-apartheid present, which Nyamnjoh calls 'resilient colonialism' (2016) and I have elsewhere referred to as (Namibia's) incomplete revolution (Fumanti 2016), do not manifest themselves only at a structural level. They are at the same time personal, and exist as a set of relations formed by the politics of race which continue to shape the present. In this sense, to understand the (post)-apartheid condition, one needs to conceive of it not as that which is different *from* apartheid, but as that which is *different* and *deferred* in time (Derrida 1994).

Through my journey across the spaces and temporalities of (post)-apartheid Namibia through the orthography of the *puncta*, this paper has contributed to opening up

space to think of (post)-apartheid as a condition that is both different and deferred. In engaging with a haptic orthography, that is experiential and emotive, my paper has allowed me to traverse and narrate the multiple and fractured temporalities and spaces of Namibia's (post)-apartheid condition. In this process I have revealed the complex ways in which whiteness, haunting and haunted, continue to produce and re-produce a discourse which, borrowing from Sara Ahmed, 'sticks' (2004) on the bodies, places, landscapes, and economies of (post)-apartheid Namibia and on the ethnographer's very own orphaned archive.

## Notes

1. In this paper I use the term 'whiteness' to describe the privilege and the prestige associated with what Mark Hunter defines as 'white tone' (Hunter 2019). In this sense my contribution is not simply about 'being white' and the experiences of 'being white', but is rather about the ways in which whiteness continues to shape social relations and make historical claims in the post-apartheid era.
2. I am aware of the very different experiences that whiteness encompasses, and how these intersect inter alia with nationality and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, class, generation and education. An emerging literature has begun to uncover the relationship between whiteness and vulnerability in the colonial world (Falkof 2015; Fumanti 2020; Schmidt 2008; Wilbraham 2014), and in settler colonial societies in particular. Against the perceived understanding that white societies were uniformly wealthy and culturally homogenous, recent scholarship on Southern Africa has brought to the fore the ways in which social class constituted a key aspect of settlers colonial societies (Money and van Zyl-Hermann 2020). White colonial societies were divided along economic and class lines, between the rich and the poor (Hyslop 2020; Mhike 2020), but also in moral terms, between 'desirable' and 'undesirable' whites (Bishi 2020; Freund 2020; Fumanti 2020; Simões de Araújo 2020). These political and moral economies shaped the politics of race in the colonial world, and continue to shape the postcolonial condition across the region.
3. While black Namibians refer to white Namibians, often pejoratively, as *shilumbu* (Oshivambo), *shirumbu* (Ru-kavango), *shirumbu* (Ovaherero), from the root *rumbu* for white person, it is not uncommon to hear white Namibians make use of the racist Afrikaans term *Kaffir*. In addition, black Namibians may simply be dismissed as 'these people' or 'hierdie mense' in Afrikaans.
4. I am also aware of the recent critique of the continued focus on skin/epidermis as a lens for understanding race in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. Coetzee (2019) in particular calls for a move beyond the limitats of this approach and its totalizing and uniform aspects. While Coetzee argues that we must look under the epidermis, to analyse blood and that which is written under the skin, others (i.e. Nuttall 2013), call for new narratives of race and new approaches that privilege the fractured and conflicting experiences of race.
5. Here I am indebted to the work Christina Sharpe (2016) and Hortense Spillers (1987).
6. Moore et al. make a similar argument for Namibian historiography, by focusing on the transnational and global dimension of Namibia's labour history (2021).
7. Namibian National Archives- NAN- SWAA/ A519/1053/2.
8. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaPnBorIMmc> (Date accessed 08/12/2020)
9. <https://www.britannica.com/science/phantom-limb-syndrome> (Date accessed 08/12/2020)
10. Csordas' (1990) ground-breaking works on 'bodies and embodiment' comes to mind, as well as Boddy's (1989) and Stoller's (1995) works on embodiment, memory and colonialism in postcolonial Africa.
11. It is important to note how nostalgia continue to drive much of the Namibian tourist industry, through safaris, hunting and memorabilia. See for ex. Haarhoff (1992); Henrichsen (2000).
12. Sections of this Punctum were previously published, see Fumanti (2014b).

13. Other German Namibian artists have engaged with issues of race, identities and the complex legacies of the colonial past. Among these are Silke Berens: <https://www.artworkarchive.com/profile/silke-berens/about> and Tim Huebschle: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim\\_Huebschle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim_Huebschle) (Date accessed 08/12/2020).
14. In writing about alternative cultural ecologies in North-West Namibia, Sian Sullivan (2017) argues that among Damara speakers, the practices of Tse-khom, talking to the spirits of the ancestors, as well as to the anonymous spirits of the dead and to eponimal ancestral heroes 'introduces travellers to the kai khoen, i.e. "big or old people", whose presence as now ancestral agencies are requested to open the road for travellers to see the best way to go'.
15. There is now a substantial literature on the genocide. See for ex. Eckl (2008); Erichsen and Olusoga (2011); Hartmann (2019); Hull (2008).
16. <https://www.nicolabrandt.com/indifference/> (Date accessed 08/12/2020).
17. As part of the exhibition *The Earth Inside* curated by Vic Simoniti at the National Art Gallery of Namibia in 2014.
18. For a very insightful analysis of Kendrick's Black Box/Chambre Noire, see De Jong (2018).
19. On (post)-apartheid urbanism see Miescher (2015); Müller-Friedman (2008).
20. Several Namibian artists have begun to take their performance art to the streets of Windhoek through a series of urban interventions. Most notable here is the work of the Kaleni Kollektiv and of performance artists Veronique Mensah, Tuli Mekondjo, JuliArt and Nashilongwe-shipwe Mushaandja. <https://namibinsider.wordpress.com/2018/06/27/jacques-mushaandja-on-violent-art-institutions-breaking-heteropatriarchy-and-decoloniality/> (Date accessed 08/12/2020).
21. SWAPO, South West Africa People's Organization, is Namibia's ruling party. SWAPO led the anticolonial struggle.
22. Reiter Denkmal debate, local Germans must sit down, Opinions – Columns | 2013-09-27, Job Amupanda, The Namibian; Anger over the Reiterdenkmal Removal, 07/01/2014, <https://www.namibian.com.na/118130/archive-read/Anger-over-the-Reiterdenkmal-removal> (Date accessed 08/12/2020). The Reiterdenkmal was removed in 2013, on Christmas Eve, to minimize disruption and protest by the German Namibian minority.
23. A Colonial-Era Wound Opens in Namibia, 21/01/2017, The New York Times.

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